

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: MARCH 21, 2012

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RASHAD M. YOUNG, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR AN
ARCHITECTURAL FIELD SURVEY OF THE OLD AND HISTORIC
ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT

ISSUE: Consideration of four grant applications to conduct an architectural field survey of the Old and Historic Alexandria District.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- 1) Approve the submission of the grant application to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) Certified Local Government (CLG) Grant Program, not to exceed \$25,000.
- 2) Approve the submission of grant application to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) Cost Share Grant Program, not to exceed \$9,000.
- 3) Approve the submission of the grant application to Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Conservation Grant Program for a Professional Services Grant, not to exceed \$25,000 in services.
- 4) Approve the submission of the grant application to Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF) for survey equipment, not to exceed \$5,000.
- 5) Approve the City Manager to execute all the necessary documents that may be required.

DISCUSSION: The Department of Planning and Zoning proposes to use the CLG, ESRI professional services, and HAF grants to develop a software application and provide equipment that will allow teams of trained volunteers to perform a digital architectural survey of the Old and Historic Alexandria District. The grants will also support project-related modifications to the City's existing GIS website to make this survey data readily available to multiple City departments, the general public and to VDHR.

These grant requests are part of a local, state and federal architectural survey pilot program spearheaded by the City of Alexandria, in cooperation with Environmental Systems Research

Institute (ESRI), the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) and the National Park Service (NPS). The grant is supported by the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review (BAR), the Office of Historic Alexandria, and the Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF). The need to identify architectural resources is stated in the Historic Preservation Chapter of the 1992 Master Plan and section 10-101(E) of the zoning ordinance.

Unlike the Parker-Gray District National Register survey and nomination completed in 2007, (1,200 resources, \$100,000 project), there has never been a comprehensive survey of the 4,000 architectural resources within the Old and Historic Alexandria District. The utilization of newly available mobile digital technology such as smart phones and tablet PCs, along with local, State, Federal, and private company resources, will enable this survey to be executed utilizing trained volunteers with a minimal amount of City staff time and at no additional fiscal impact to the City. The proposed survey will be performed over a five year period. Once the mobile field survey software is developed and tested in the first year, subsequent survey phases will be accomplished by local volunteers with no additional grant funding required.

Property owners will benefit from the survey data which will be imported into an enhanced City website and made available for public viewing. City Staff will utilize the data for future preservation planning efforts, to improve the accuracy and reduce the time required to research BAR staff reports, and to manage and share the information about historic resources among multiple City departments. The information will also be shared with the National Register of Historic Places (NPS) as well as the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR). This expanded data sharing among agencies will provide expanded public access to the information, potentially assist in emergency management, and provide the City with new planning tools.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Department of Planning and Zoning is requesting grant awards not to exceed \$64,000 in total. If awarded, ESRI's professional services grant will be utilized as matching funds for the State of Virginia's Certified Local Government (CLG) grant. The City will meet the cost share requirement of the CLG grant by leveraging an additional \$13,885 in staff time and \$4,640 in volunteer hours. The HAF's one-time grant for equipment will be used through all five survey phases.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Illustrative Map of Survey Area

Attachment 2: Letter of Support: National Park Service

STAFF:

Faroll Hamer, Director of Planning and Zoning

Steve Chozick, Division Chief, Geographic Information Systems

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager